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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 006499

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/SE, EUR/RPM, PM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/10/2013

TAGS: PREL MARR MOPS TU IZ PTER ASEC AF AR

SUBJECT: MFA DEPUTY U/S TUYGAN STRESSES THE IMPORTANCE OF "GETTING IT RIGHT" ON POSSIBLE TURKISH CONTRIBUTION TO STABILIZATION FORCE

(U) Classified by Ambassador Eric Edelman. Reasons: 1.5 (B and D).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) MFA Deputy U/S Tuygan told Ambassador October 16 that the GOT was grateful for the US assistance before and after the recent bombing in front of the Turkish embassy in Baghdad. Tuygan agreed that it was important for the US and Turkey to manage and "get right" the issue of a possible Turkish contribution to the stabilization force in Iraq. Tuygan said that passage of the resolution before the UNSC enhanced the stature of the IGC and increased the importance of Turkey obtaining the GC's support before deploying troops to Iraq. FM Gul's public call for the OIC to play a larger role in Iraq is in part fueled by private criticism by some OIC members of Turkey "going at it alone" in Iraq and designed to press the OIC to take a more supportive role in Iraq. Tuygan characterized statements by Kurdish leaders that Turkey would not be permitted to deploy to Iraq through the north as unhelpful, particularly given Turkey's past support for the Kurds through Operation Northern Watch. Turkey will continue to press Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA and the wider international community. Turkey would like to remain engaged in Afghanistan and likely will direct its limited resources to contributing to existing PRTs and other areas where it can have an impact. If SYG Robertson establishes a special representative for Afghanistan, Turkey may put forward a candidate. Turkey remains open to improved relations with Armenia but the GOA must make the first move and recognize turkey's borders. End summary.

BOMBING IN FRONT OF TU EMBASSY IN BAGHDAD

¶2. (C) Ambassador called on MFA Deputy Under Secretary Ali Tuygan October 16. He opened the meeting by expressing his regrets for the recent bombing in front of the Turkish embassy in Baghdad. Tuygan said Turkey was grateful for the assistance provided by the US before (i.e. intel sharing) and after the incident. "If the barriers had not been stationed in front of the embassy, someone certainly would have died." He personally thanked CPA Chief of Staff Kennedy for his offer to provide temporary housing for the Turkish Ambassador in Baghdad, whose residence received far greater damage than initial reports had indicated.

¶3. (C) Tuygan said the GOT had decided to send a military aircraft to Baghdad on Friday, October 18 to assess the damage and determine a course of action to repair it. The aircraft may need to remain on the ground in Baghdad longer than what he understands to be the "maximum" of five hours, and he requested the Embassy's assistance in securing the necessary support and permission from US authorities in Baghdad for the mission. (Comment: ODC/Turkey coordinated this request with appropriate authorities that day. End comment.) Tuygan said the aircraft may also transport back some non-essential personnel stationed at the Turkish embassy in Baghdad and some valuables (including antique paintings) that cannot be safeguarded.

¶4. (C) Tuygan said that the GOT was watching other countries' reactions to the bombing. In addition to the US, NATO, the EU and the Greeks already had issued statements condemning the bombing. Unfortunately, "others" (unspecified) were using the bombing to stress the dangers associated with Turkish troops deploying to Iraq, he said. Still others were using the bombing to suggest that PKK/Kadek will be dealt with.

IRAQ AND THE STABILIZATION FORCE

15. (C) Tuygan said the US and Turkey had been through a lot during the last year. Mistakes had been made on both sides. Now we are a critical point in the relationship. Tuygan thought it was important for the US and Turkey "to get right" the issue of a possible Turkish contribution to the stabilization force in Iraq. The Ambassador added that it was more important to get it right than to do it fast. Tuygan concurred. Tuygan added that there were a number of new elements in play, including the likely passage of a new UNSCR on Iraq later that day (October 16). The new resolution would elevate the status of the Governing Council in Iraq and therefore make it more important for Turkey to have the support of the GC before the Turks deploy troops to Iraq, Tuygan argued. The Ambassador cautioned Tuygan against Turkey's expecting a formal invitation from the GC. Tuygan acknowledged that such a statement might be difficult. Turning to Turkish-Iraqi relations, Tuygan said that Turkey had undergone a transformation in the last year on Iraq and the GOT wanted to help in Iraq in any way it could.

16. (C) Ambassador said that an important part of our combined effort to manage the issue of a possible Turkish contribution to Iraq involved the press. Recent press reports circulating around Ankara that Turkey would have to contribute up to 50,000 troops were unhelpful and could complicate prospects for a possible Turkish contribution. The Ambassador asked Tuygan to work with us to manage the press. Tuygan agreed, describing such press reports as "crazy." Tuygan said there was one factor that, if left unattended, would complicate Turkey's efforts on this front: further statements by Kurdish officials that Turkish troops would not be permitted to pass through the north en route to their area of operation will cause the GOT problems with the Turkish public and others in Turkey. Tuygan said he found the Kurds' position particularly unhelpful, given Turkey's past support for the Kurds in the form of more than 12 years of cooperation in Operation Northern Watch.

17. (C) Tuygan described the recent visit by the CPA's Greenstock to Turkey as useful. He said that Greenstock arrived in Ankara with a more "rosy" picture of the overall situation in Iraq than the prevailing view in Turkey, a position that Tuygan acknowledged as not surprising given that he had come from Iraq and therefore was more aware of the positive developments there and anxious to share them. Tuygan said that by the end of the visit, Greenstock and Ziyal agreed there were a number of challenges that lie ahead.

18. (C) The Ambassador asked Tuygan if he could elaborate on press reports suggesting that FM Gul had called for an Islamic peacekeeping force for Iraq during the recent OIC meeting in Malaysia. Tuygan said that he had not seen the proposals that Gul had reportedly offered during the OIC meeting. Until now the OIC had not come out in favor of supporting stabilization efforts in Iraq, and a number of OIC members were telling Turkish officials that Turkey should not contribute troops to Iraq. Tuygan then outlined what he believed was the reasoning behind the FM's public call for the OIC to play a greater role in Iraq: "If you (the OIC members) are not happy with Turkey going in alone to Iraq, then why don't you go in with us?" Tuygan said that he had heard from the Turkish delegation in Kuala Lumpur that the OIC resolution may call on OIC members to make greater contributions to reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Iraq. If this were to occur, "this would be enough for us."

IRAN

19. (C) The Ambassador thanked Tuygan for Turkey's support at the IAEA on Iran. Tuygan said that the GOI was not happy with Turkey's position. That said, Turkey will continue to insist in its discussions with the Iranians that there is only one way out: full transparency and cooperation with the IAEA and the wider international community. Tuygan said the burden is on Iran to prove to the rest of the world that it is cooperating.

AFGHANISTAN

¶10. (C) Tuygan said that Afghanistan remains important for Turkey while acknowledging that it has lost some of its significance as Iraq-related issues increase in importance. He confirmed that Turkey intends to contribute civilian personnel to the UK-led PRT in Mazar and that the idea of Turkey leading its own PRT is still under discussion. In an internal MFA discussion the previous day (October 15), however, Tuygan said he recommended that for the time being Turkey focus its attention and possible contributions in Afghanistan on a limited number of sectors where it could have a real and positive impact. Tuygan listed health and agriculture as two possibilities, and said Turkey was considering sending a couple of advisors to work with Afghan authorities in these two areas. Tuygan said that he had learned that the SYG Robertson was considering establishing the position of a special representative for Afghanistan, and that Turkey was considering putting forward a candidate.

¶11. (C) Tuygan said that in the past, Dostum had been singled out by Tajik groups as a source of concern in northern Afghanistan. From the beginning, Turkey has advised Dostum to transform himself from a warlord into politician. Tuygan acknowledged that such a transformation would not be easy, but argued that Dostum was making an effort. Tuygan said that Dostum is cooperating with Karzai and asked that the US keep this in mind.

AZERBAIJAN AND ARMENIA

¶12. (C) Tuygan noted that initial reports suggested that PM Aliyev had obtained a majority of the votes in Azerbaijan's Presidential elections. Tuygan said it was too early to tell whether an Aliyev victory could have a positive impact on Turkish-Armenian relations. He reiterated that FM Gul remained committed to a trilateral meeting with his Azeri and Armenian counterparts, and would likely continue to support holding such a meeting in Turkey. Tuygan said he understood that the Minsk Group had some new proposals for progress and said Turkey would be interested in learning more about the ideas. Tuygan insisted that Turkey was prepared to move forward with Armenia, but the GOA first had to make a gesture and move on recognizing Turkey's borders. Turkey and Armenia have made good progress in their bilateral talks and said that Turkish Airlines soon would begin flying to Yerevan.

¶13. (U) Baghdad and Kabul minimize considered.
EDELMAN